

REMARKS

The Examiner's comments from the Office Action mailed April 20, 2007 have been carefully considered. Claims 24 and 25 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in response to the restriction requirement. Applicants reserve the right to pursue claims 24 and 25 in a later filed divisional application. Claims 11-23 remain pending in the application. Amendments have been made to claim 11. Support for these limitations can be found throughout the specification and figures, e.g., at paragraphs [0007] and [0030]. No new matter has been added.

Reexamination and allowance of the pending claims in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement

The application is subject to a Restriction Requirement. The Office Action requires the election of one of the following two groups:

Group I: Claims 11-23, drawn to an optical fiber storage tray; and

Group II: Claims 24-25, drawn to a method of storing optical fiber.

Applicants hereby affirm the provisional election of Group I. Claims 11-23 read on Group I. Claims 24-25 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer accordingly.

Claim Objections

Formal objection has been made to claim 11. The Examiner's comments have been considered and appropriate correction has been made. Applicants assert the objection is overcome and request withdrawal of the objection.

Claim Rejections

Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Applicants disagree that unwinding the fiber from the first cassette lacks support in the disclosure. To expedite prosecution, however, claim 11 has been amended.

Claim 11, as amended, recites, in part, a first cassette configured to receive and store an excess length of the first optical fiber that is sufficiently long to allow the separation and removal of the first cassette from a housing to a remote workstation. Support for this limitation can be found, e.g., in paragraphs [0007] and [0030].

Applicants assert the rejection is overcome and request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,946,440 to Puetz. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 11 recites, in part, a first cassette configured to be separated and removed from the housing when arranged in the second position. The first cassette stores an excess length of the first optical fiber that is sufficiently long to allow the separation and removal of the first cassette from the housing to a remote workstation.

In contrast, Puetz does not disclose or suggest a first cassette configured to be separated and removed from the housing when arranged in the second position. Rather, the trays 170 of Puetz are merely pivotally mounted to the device 20 at a hinge region 206 defining a central opening 208. The trays 170 do not separate from the device 20 by pivoting to the second position outside the device 20.

For at least these reasons, Puetz does not anticipate claim 11. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 11 is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

Claims 12-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Puetz. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 12-23 depend from claim 11 and are allowable over Puetz for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 11. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 12-23 is respectfully requested. Applicants do not otherwise concede the correctness of the rejection and reserve the right to make additional arguments if necessary.

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Conclusion

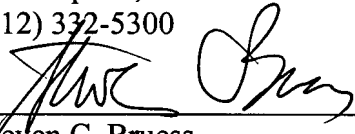
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.



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Respectfully submitted,

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